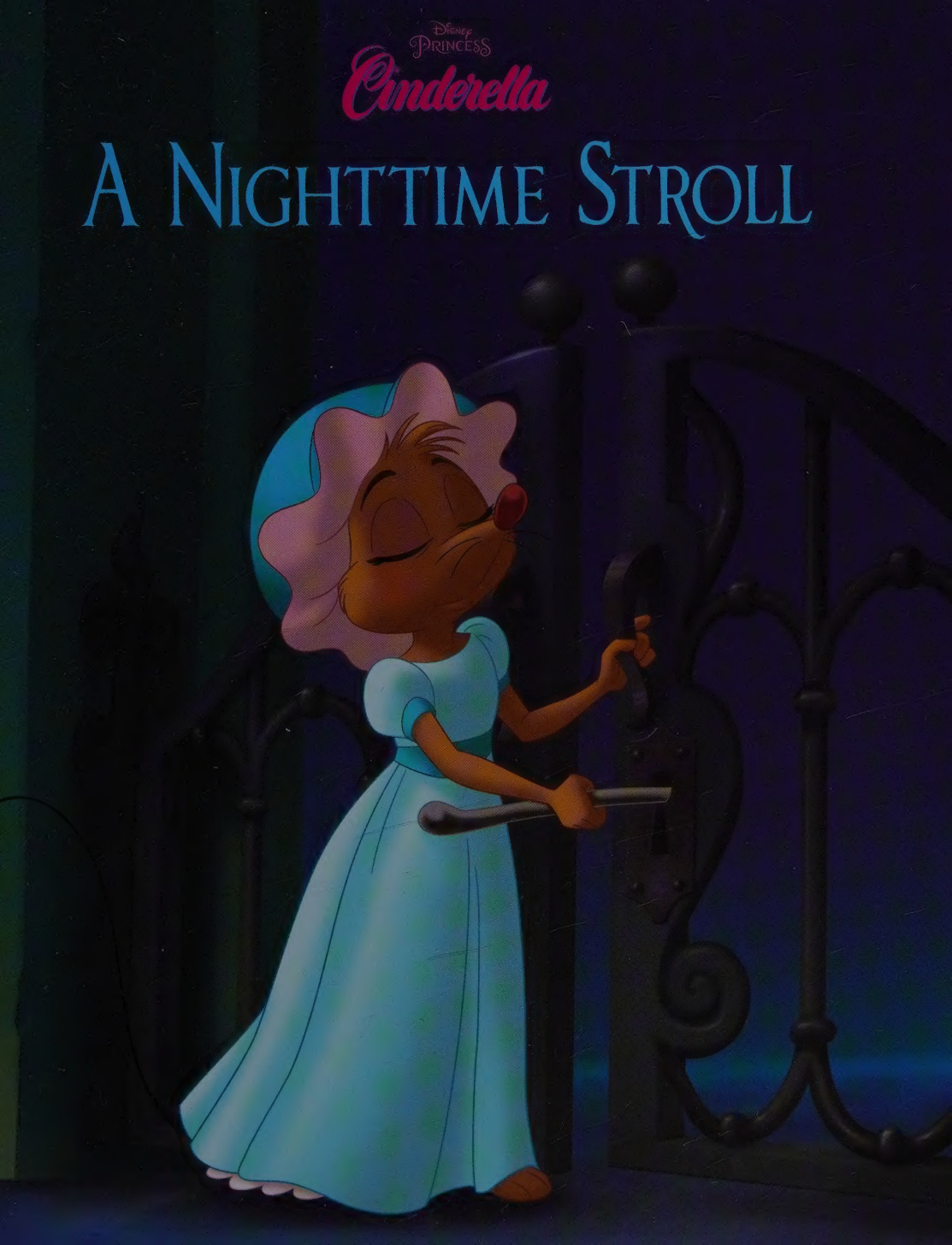
Disney Princess

Cinderella

A Nighttime Stroll



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For information address Disney Press, 1101 Flower Street, Glendale, California 91201.

Printed in China
First Box Set Edition, September 2017
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

ISBN 978-1-368-01488-5
FAC-023680-17167

This book was printed on paper created from a sustainable source

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Book One

Disney Press
Los Angeles • New York

"CINDERELLY! CINDERELLY!" Gus yelled, running into Cinderella's room. "There's a new mouse in the barn! Her name is Greta. Can she stay with us? Can she? Can she?"

Cinderella smiled at her mouse friend. "Of course!" she said. "There's always room here for one more!"

Cinderella loved her mouse friends. She had rescued them from her stepmother's cat, Lucifer, before she met the Prince. Now they lived with her in the palace.

Cinderella and the mice got to work. They wanted to make their new friend feel right at home!

The mice built a tiny bed for Greta and stuffed a mouse-sized mattress with dandelion fluff from the palace lawn. Meanwhile, Cinderella sewed Greta some new clothes and Gus made a nightstand out of a spool of thread.

"Greta will sleep like a baby mouse!" Gus said, placing a small vase of flowers on the nightstand.

Gus couldn't wait to introduce his new friend to Cinderella! "Greta!" Gus cried. "This is Cinderelly!"

The princess knelt to shake Greta's tiny hand with her pinkie finger. "You're very welcome here," the princess said. "You must be hungry."

Greta patted her tummy and nodded.

Cinderella smiled at her new mouse friend. "Well, why don't we get you dressed, and then we'll have a nice, filling dinner!"

While the mice had been making Greta's bed, Cinderella's bird friends had prepared a huge welcome feast. There was a baby-lettuce salad, grilled cheese soup with tiny toast corners, and every kind of nut the palace kitchen stocked.

Greta happily dug in to the food while the mice asked her all sorts of questions. Soon Gus noticed Greta's eyelids drooping. Taking her by the hand, he showed her to her new bed.

"Oh!" Greta said, clapping her hands in delight. "Such a snug bed! Thank you! Thank you!"

Greta climbed into her bed and was soon fast asleep, snoring softly into her dandelion pillow.

Later that night, a shadowy figure marched down a path in the royal garden.

"Halt!" one of the watchmen called. "Who goes there?"

The guard knelt down and peered into the shadowy lane. "Why, it's one of Her Highness's mouse friends!" he said.

Greta rubbed her eyes and looked around. "Where am I?" she asked, confused.

The guard smiled and told Greta that she was in the garden. Then he walked her back to the palace.

The next morning, Greta told her new friends all about her nighttime adventure. "It was so strange!" she said. "One moment I was in bed, all cozy and snug, having the nicest dream. . . ."

"And then-a what happened?" Jaq asked.

"I woke up in the garden!" Greta exclaimed. "In my nightgown! With no idea how I'd gotten there!"

The mice gasped.

"I've never sleepwalked before, not ever!" Greta said.

Everyone agreed that Greta's sleepwalking was likely a one-time thing. She was probably just getting used to her new bed.

"I'm sure it won't happen again," Greta agreed cheerfully.

That night, Greta went to bed confident that she'd stay put until morning. A few hours later, though, she woke up at the palace gates with no memory of how she'd gotten there!

Then, the night after that, she marched right through the gates and into the street.

"Rats," Greta said as a kind villager walked her back to the palace.

Over the next few days, Cinderella and her mouse friends did everything they could to help Greta.

Jaq tried giving her a glass of warm milk before bed. "Always helps-a me sleep tight!" he said. But that night, Greta woke up in the middle of the village.

Gus tried putting noisy crumpled paper around Greta's bed, but she marched right through it without blinking an eye.

Cinderella tried putting a mouse-sized gate at the front door, but Greta picked the lock and waltzed right out of the palace . . . without waking up!

"I didn't even know I could pick locks!" Greta said. "You learn something new every day!"

"Or every night," Gus agreed.

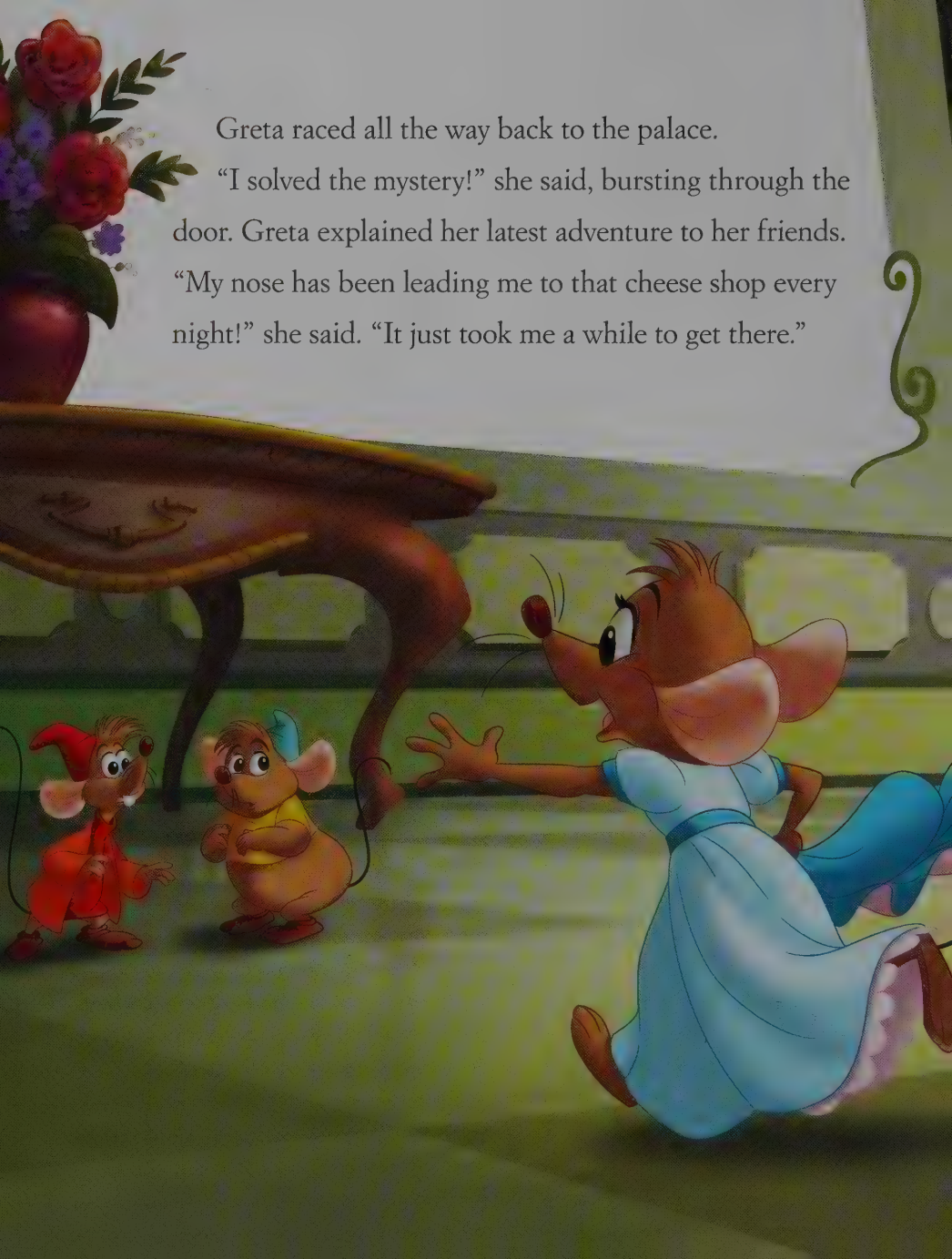
No matter how hard Cinderella and her friends tried to keep Greta inside the palace, nothing worked. Every night she woke up farther and farther away. Finally, very early one morning, Greta woke up with sore feet in a village she didn't recognize. She'd never been that far from the palace before. She couldn't even see it.

"Where am I?" the little mouse wondered out loud as she walked the streets. The town she'd sleepwalked into was tiny and quiet. Everyone was still asleep.

Suddenly, Greta stopped. The most glorious smell was wafting out of a little shop.

"'House of Cheese,'" Greta read out loud. The glorious smell that practically had her floating closer to the door was cheese. But not just any cheese.

"I've never smelled a cheese like that," Greta murmured. It was stinky and rich, and she was sure it would taste amazing.



Greta raced all the way back to the palace.

"I solved the mystery!" she said, bursting through the door. Greta explained her latest adventure to her friends. "My nose has been leading me to that cheese shop every night!" she said. "It just took me a while to get there."

Everyone was curious about the amazing cheese. What could smell so wonderful that it made Greta sleepwalk all the way to the next village?

So, shortly after breakfast, Cinderella summoned the royal coach. Soon she and her mouse friends were on their way to the countryside.

"There it is!" Greta squeaked, pointing to the shop.

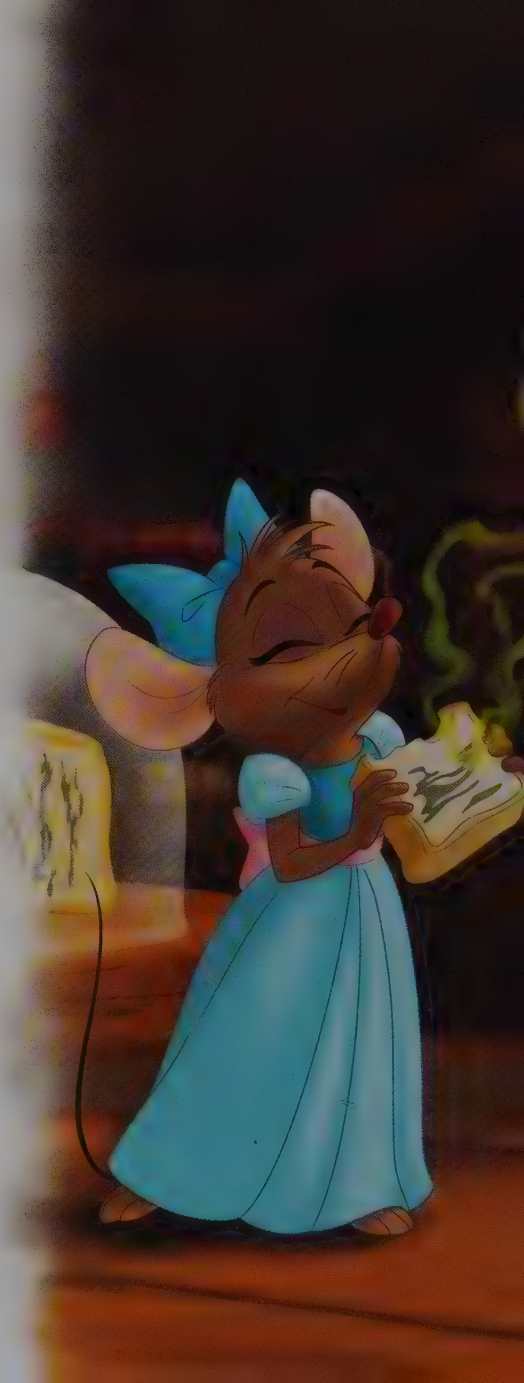
The coach pulled to a stop, and the friends climbed out. The humble cheese shop owner was very surprised to find himself with none other than the royal princess and a handful of mice as his first customers of the day.

It took Greta only a few seconds of sniffing around to identify the stinky cheese she'd been sleepwalking toward. "It's this one!" she said.

The shop owner happily gave Greta a sample.

"Oh, it's glorious!" Greta said. "It's like sunrise and sunset and smelly feet all rolled into one!"

Cinderella was glad her new friend had found something she enjoyed so much. With a wink at the shop owner, she bought an entire wheel of the cheese for her little friend.



That night, Greta had a wonderful bedtime snack: several tiny crackers smeared with her new favorite cheese.

"Yum!" she said. "That really hit the spot."

Then, her tummy full, she snuggled into bed—where she stayed all night.

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ISBN 978-136801488-5

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